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This special issue of "The English Record" contains 12 articles about the teaching and learning of English at the primary and secondary school levels. The issue includes: "Reading Education in New York State" by E. B. Nyquist; "Writing and Imaginative Writing" by D. J. Casey; "Creativity Theory and Language Arts" by R. P. Smith; "Communication: A Two-Way Street" by R. Dykstra; "Let 'Em Talk" by R. L. Knudson; "Creative Dramatics: Field of the Future" by S. Schwartz; "Research and the Teaching of English" by R. L. Cayer; "Asking the First Two Questions" by C. R. Cooper; "Sequencing in English K-12: A Model" by D. R. Wood; "Making Sense of Behavioral Objectives and Accountability" by F. J. Tutera; "The Teacher in a Changing Society: Will the Leopard Change Its Spots?" by A. R. Mangione; and "Books of Yesterday" by E. Bennett. (Author/DI)

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PRESCRIPTIONS / STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING / LEARNING ENGLISH

Jerome Green

CS 200 251

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SUMMER, 1972

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VOL. XXII SUMMER, 1972 No. 4

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LEARNING AND TEACHING ENGLISH: ARTICLES

READING EDUCATION IN NEW YORK STATE ---------- *Ewald B. Nyquist* 4
WRITING AND IMAGINATIVE WRITING ---------- *Daniel J. Casey* 8
CREATIVITY THEORY AND LANGUAGE ARTS ---------- *Rodney P. Smith* 13
COMMUNICATION: A TWO-WAY STREET ---------- *Robert Dykstra* 19
LET 'EM TALK ---------- *Richard L. Knudson* 25
CREATIVE DRAMATICS: FIELD OF THE FUTURE ---------- *Sheila Schwartz* 28
RESEARCH AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH ---------- *Roger L. Cayer* 34
ASKING THE FIRST TWO QUESTIONS ---------- *Charles R. Cooper* 39
SEQUENCING IN ENGLISH K-12: A MODEL ---------- *David R. Wood* 42
MAKING SENSE OF BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES AND ACCOUNTABILITY ---------- *Frank J. Tutera* 45
THE TEACHER IN A CHANGING SOCIETY: WILL THE LEOPARD CHANGE ITS SPOTS? ------ *Anthony Roy Mangione* 49
BOOKS OF YESTERDAY ---------- *Esther Bennett* 52

AFFECTIVE ENGLISH: ARTICLES AND POEMS

LET THE VOICE BE YOURS, TEACHER ---------- *Kenneth Gambone* 54
ANALYZE: SLOW LEARNER GUILES ---------- *Patrick J. Morrissey, Jr.* 55
ENLARGE ---------- *Richard Latta* 56
VERY TRULY YOURS ---------- *Burton Schaber* 57
150,000 STUDENT CONFESSIONS ---------- *A. Blinderman* 59

DEPARTMENTS

EDITORIAL: PRESCRIPTION FOR ENGLISH ---------- *Jerome Green* 2
REVIEWS:
JOHN AND HORNER'S *Early Childhood Bilingual Education* ---------- *Margarita Mir* 64
LILLIAN WEBER'S *The English Infant School and Informal Education* ---------- *Dorothy Hitchen* 65
MCKAY AND MACKENZIE'S *On My Mind: A Writing Series* ---------- *Stuart Scott* 67
COMING IN "THE ENGLISH RECORD" ---------- Inside Back Cover

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READING EDUCATION IN NEW YORK STATE

Ewald B. Nyquist

From time to time it is essential that a State Education Department review policies and programs in all areas of operation, revise and update these in the light of new research, present needs, and better practices. Two factors served to focus the Department's attention on reading in the past year. One was the declaration by our late Commissioner, James E. Allen, of a Right to Read effort to be mounted nationally. This, coupled with the continuing evidence gathered through the Department's mandated reading tests at grades 3, 6, and 9, that in certain areas of New York State large numbers of children were unable to succeed in the academic activities usually carried out at their assigned grade level when these involve reading, led to the revision and updating of the Regents statement of their position on the teaching of reading. That revision was issued in July, 1971, as Position Paper No. 12.

Its content summarized the thinking of the Department and the Regents on the nature of the good reading program, the needs which must be filled if this sort of reading program is to be generally implemented throughout the State and the action which must be taken to make general implementation a reality.

The paper states that reading programs should be learner-centered in practice as well as theory. It is an educational aphorism, especially in New York State where the goal of the State Education Department is to make of each all that he is capable of becoming, that education should be individualized in its goals for each learner. Past practice in reading instruction while moving toward this goal through its general practice of ability grouping in the elementary reading program has centered, not on the child and his needs, but upon the materials and methods through which the child receives instruction. Each child is fitted to the program, rather than the program being fitted to the child. The major adjustment for individualization is often differential pacing which permits some children to move more, others less rapidly.

As programs become more learner-centered, selection of the objectives for reading instruction will precede the choice of the materials and these objectives will serve as part of the criteria for the development or selection of materials. But before any decisions are made as to the objectives for instruction or the materials and methods to be used, there must come an assessment of the status and the nature of the child himself. Continuing diagnostic assessment of the child and his progress becomes the base on which all decisions affecting the kind of reading instruction he will receive will be made.

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This assessment in fact becomes the major part of the evaluation process. Evaluation of skill mastery at any point in time will serve as indicator that new goals or objectives must be set to carry him further along the way toward the ability to apply reading skills in satisfying his needs and desires.

The paper does not argue the advantages of specific methodologies. It proposes that many ways for decoding written language must eventually be a part of any individual's skills repertory, for no one way is enough. Even though one system is used initially to teach decoding, any early phonics or linguistics skills must soon be supplemented by a large store of sight words for efficiency. Consistency in providing sequentially sound instruction in any good method is more apt to determine the individual learner's success in beginning reading than the nature of the method itself.

The policy statement also deals with the pre-school child and the role his parents play in their child's physical and intellectual development. However, it assigns the responsibility to the school for stimulating and developing the readiness of *all* children so each may read. Effective kindergarten programs must teach those who are ready and willing to learn to read as well as those not yet physically and mentally mature enough to cope with the early reading program.

However, the Regents' concern is not limited to the young child only. It extends through the secondary curriculum as well and applies the same learner-centered, diagnostic-prescriptive approach to this area. Secondary teachers are responsible for providing direct instruction in the comprehension skills related to their subject area. This instruction should be geared to the abilities and achievement levels of the students in their classes. In addition, it is the responsibility of the secondary school to provide special reading programs for secondary students who are not able readers. For many such students, specific plans for career or for education beyond high school renew their motivation for improvement in reading. Not only must the less able reader be helped but the gifted must also be challenged to increase his understanding of written language.

At this time, however, the primary focus of attention at both the state and local level must be directed toward the vast numbers of children and older students who have not succeeded in making reading useful for acquiring information and who have not found pleasure in reading on their own.

Unlike previous statements on instructional programs, this paper proposes action to be taken by both the Department and the schools to implement the program design outlined in this paper successfully. The school itself has the basic responsibility to evaluate its present reading program and begin the process which will bring it in accord with stated policies. However, the State Education Department must provide both personal and technical support to the school as they review and revise their reading curriculum.

Realizing that the final determinant of the success of any program lies in the effectiveness of teaching within each classroom, the State seeks to provide criteria for teacher preparation and supportive ser-

vices which will enable teachers to provide the individually focused diagnostic-prescriptive teaching within ther classrooms.

A first step has been the introduction of a reading requirement for elementary certification. This requirement has two parts .The first applies to all students who will be certified through completion of a state approved program in elementary education such as those offered in our State Universities. This requires that each candidate will have mastered a set of basic and minimal teaching competencies which should be characteristic of all good reading instruction. The college will develop and administer a system of proficiency measurement. This system must be approved by the State Education Department. The colleges will be required to testify that all candidates for elementary certification have acquired at least a minimal set of proficiencies needed in the teaching of reading. Since this is an entirely new concept in certification for this State, we may expect some early unevenness in application which, however, should be quickly eliminated as we learn from our experience in administering and evaluating the criteria.

There is a six-hour course requirement for those people who receive their teacher training out of state or in colleges whose teacher education programs are not approved. The Department is already exploring the possibility of adding a proficiency examination to the requirement for such candidates.

But the greater part of Department effort will be directed at in-service education to help classroom teachers. The first large scale effort has been directed toward the teachers of the educationally disadvantaged since these pupils and their learning problems are a grave concern. Fifty-three districts will participate in a leadership training program which will use existing summer reading programs as leadership training labs for selected local in-service leaders. These leaders will then organize and implement in-service programs in their home school building. The programs will zero in on the collection and use of individual and group diagnostic data in planning instruction and on ways classrooms can be organized to permit a variety of reading activities to occur simultaneously. Other kinds of in-service activities are proposed as well for administrators, aides, paraprofessionals, and volunteers.

In addition, the Department has projected and is constructing a statewide instructional support system for program planning and evaluation which will be the first of its kind in the United States. This system will provide a bank from which selected objectives may be drawn by the local program planner. These objectives are designed to be measured by criterion test items. For an individual program, series of tests especially constructed for that program will be given at regular intervals during the period of instruction. By randomizing the test forms over the total number of program participants at each testing all objectives selected will be tested each time. At some points the test scores on specific objectives will be pre-instructional, at others, immediately post-instructional and thereafter will be retention scores. Continuous feedback will permit the school to evalu-

ate the results of instruction during the program as well as before and after. Unique to the system is the freedom it allows the local district in determining its own instructional goals and electing its own organization and methodology for instruction. The Department believes that reading can be taught through many media and in many organizational patterns from open schools to learning laboratories. The State Education Department is firmly committed to individualization and intends to replace verbal commitment with action in order to tap the full potential of each learner and give each that most important of learning tools the ability to read.

But the responsibility for improving reading is not the Department's alone. It is firmly placed on the local district as well. It rests with the school administrator whose commitment and leadership must pave the way for the changes which must take place. And finally, it rests with each classroom teacher who must be accountable to each child, his parents and the community for the quality of instruction in each and every classroom.

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By

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WRITING AND IMAGINATIVE WRITING

Daniel J. Casey

Universities, traditionally the worst teachers of writing, have manned the gaps in composition programs with a drove of uninitiated assistants impressed by a department senex—himself unimpressed. Up to now the fare has been most unimaginative. English educationists have long dallied with the notion that creativity might be taught, but in the end the demonstration lesson is all too frequently "the topic sentence" by the numbers. The elementary and secondary teachers of English have been caught up running the language, literature, and composition gamuts as part of a great coverage conspiracy; they are only beginning to question their roles as full-time skill builders, linguistic mechanics, or mnemonic prompters for outmoded examinations.

The periodical offerings on imaginative writing have been disappointing, to say the least. The same article is resurrected on a cycle by John Brown, Associate Professor of English at Smog State, by Jane Smithers, English Chairman at Owanka High, and by Bessie Oglethorpe, third-grade teacher at Sparse Hills Elementary. Surely the ideas are reshuffled now and again, but there is a mimeograph likeness in the diagnosis and the prescription. The journals, like the institutions and English faculties, have preferred exposition and rhetoric, and, over the years, they have concentrated on the surer stuff of the craft.

The human imagination cannot be tammeled by wearisome formula exercises forever, nor can it continue to lie in perpetual catalepsis. Universities are responding to student demands for workshops in writing poetry, drama, and fiction; secondary electives programs are introducing more courses and independent studies in imaginative writing, and elementary curricula are calling for greater emphasis on creative development. The narrow trichotomy and coverage, the convenient self deceptions, have been challenged and found wanting, and English teachers at all levels are shifting their stance. The malaise in imaginative writing is, I believe, at an end.

What we must do now is question the validity of earlier concepts and practices related to the creative process and the teaching of imaginative writing. What we must do is inquire further into the faulty premises that have misguided us in the classroom and begin to reconsider not only the premises but their unfortunate consequences. Imaginative writing has been given short shrift for a variety of reasons, few of them defensible.

First, we have made the assumption that creativity is meted out in large doses to a chosen few artists and intellectuals. Therefore, we

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reason, to devote a block of valuable class time to culling the talents of the elite is to abrogate responsibility to the basic needs of the many. But creativity is universal. We are all sent naked and uncertain into the world, and we all carry a spark of creativity, a spark that may not be as bright or enduring as another's, yet a spark.

Donald McKinnon's research, reported in a *Saturday Review* article in February, 1962, entitled "What Makes a Person Creative?" sought out the common denominators of creativity. McKinnon revealed that the stereotype—the genius with an exceptionally high I.Q., the eccentric in thinking and appearance, the Bohemian, the egghead, the long hair—is unfounded. Among the six hundred in his sampling, I.Q. scores ranged widely, suggesting that the correlation between intelligence as measured by the test and actual creative performance is insignificant. The fact is the sterotype failed the test.

What then are the qualities and traits of creative individuals? The research finds that they have an unusual capacity to record and retain experiences, that they have wide experiences, that they operate in the realm of symbols rather than by logic, and that they tend to prefer perception to judgment. if one accepts the research, he should set the objectives for teaching imaginative writing to compliment observed behavioral patterns. He should then provide training in observation and perception, offer a variety of experiences, and encourage youngsters to exercise intuition and imagination.

McKinnon repudiates the stereotype and his comprehensive study suggests that creative individuals have traits that are common to a large segment of a population. The research, McKinnon's and others', reenforces the notion that every child has creative potential, that no child can be ruled out. To continue attributing such potential to the elite, the logicians, the Bohemian types, is short-sighted and wrong headed. As teachers of English, we are charged to discover creative potential and to tap it, to extend the syllabus beyond skills, exposition, and rhetoric.

The second faulty premise is as egregious as the first, for it holds that creativity ends in communication. The effectiveness of imaginative writing seems to depend on its having meaning to the teacher. What an individual creates need not communicate beyond self. He sees what he has wrought first as a private experience and "perhaps" later as a public expression. Emily Dickinson's poetry is a powerful persuasian of the degree to which that is the case. And John Fowles' recent statement, that he didn't care whether anyone read his books, that the joy came in the writing of them, would seem to bear that out as well.

When imaginative writing does communicate beyond self, it does so because the author has managed to touch common ground with the reader. In other words, the reader has had an experience, real or vicarious, that parallels the writer's. In the developmental stage a teacher may provide a common starting point to strengthen the possibility of communication, if he is at all concerned with communication. But the audience of *one* should not be overlooked. The

kindergartener, whose pride in a vague design finger painted on oaktag and the adolescent, whose torrent of nonsense words shames the local politician, have touched the spark of imagination. They have discovered a uniqueness of style, tone, and imagery, a singular talent for self-expression. They have managed a fusion of human passion and the medium. In the end they may, of course, publish or exhibit, or they may silently press the creation into the pages of an inconspicuous text. The creator is the *arbiter elegantiae*.

The third fallacy is that a strong tie exists between formal writing and imaginative writing. Indeed, to many teachers the two are indistinguishable. Formal writing emphasizes a grammar, a structure, research techniques, and expository method; imaginative writing may be lyric, unstructured, and fluid. Formal writing and the skills of formal writing are incremental or cumulative, and the teaching of it is rewarding, for it can be taught. Imaginative writing is not cumulative; it is a response, a reaction, rather than a consciously or systematically acquired skill, and it may be illogical and irrational. Imaginative writing cannot really be taught. It can be channeled, encouraged, tended.

John Ciardi, in his article, "On Writing and Bad Writing," put it this way:

> No teacher can hope to build for the student that haunted house of the mortally excited talent and self. The good teacher recognizes the real excitement when he sees it. He can encourage it as one encourages a fire by poking, prodding, and blowing on it. But it is dangerous for any teacher to let himself think that the fire is his doing. At best, the teacher may strike the match. But the match must fall into the all-blazing possibility of soul-tinder. (*Saturday Review*, Dec. 15, 1962, p. 11.)

Teachers of basic skills and teachers of exposition have for years unintentionally attacked youngsters exercising imagination. They have developed creative writing assignments only to destroy the writers with grammatical, structural, and mechanical barrages that have had little to do with the imagination. Teachers have unwarily superimposed an artificial style and their own best thoughts on every piece of writing to cross the desk. Worse yet, they have often destroyed the spontaneity of the piece by introducing a rarified air, incapable of supporting stylistic vitality. To paraphrase an expresson heard recently, "If you think you can't kill imagination, then you underestimate the power of education."

Skills, exposition, and rhetoric must be taught, but somewhere along the line the teacher should decide whether he wants to strike a balance between formal writing and imaginative writing. He will first have to make the distinction between the two, and having made the distinction, he will have to live by it.

The fourth premise bears directly on the third, for the fourth premise says that imaginative writing should be corrected and graded to compare efforts, to note improvement, or to measure it against a standard. English teachers find it difficult to break out of the correction syndrome. Even as they reach for the morning mail, they unsheathe the red pen or blue pencil to do it justice. For the English

teacher no artifact may simply be; it must be correct or be corrected.

On what basis do we measure imagination? By what criteria does the teacher of English judge the creative act? Go to the gallery or the concert hall and consider, if you will, a modern painting, a modern sculpture, a modern orchestration. While we may agree on the merits of Raphael's "Coronation," Michelangelo's "David," or Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique," we certainly will disagree, and sometimes violently, on the merits of modern aesthetic expression. Oscar Wilde, in his preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, assures us, "Diversity of opinion about a work of art shows that the work is new, complex, and vital. When critics disagree the artist is in accord with himself. We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he doesn't admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely. All art is quite useless."

Correcting and grading imaginative writing is I suspect, more an unconscious than an unconscionable act. There is a positive urgency about correcting misspellings, revising awkward phrasing, and attending to conventional punctuation—the stuff of grading. Teachers find it uncomfortable adjusting to the idea that imaginative writing cannot begin with those concerns. The writing may be inspired or aggravated by a teacher, but the process is essentially non-directive and the product is non-corrective. Imaginative writing is evaluated by its sternest critic, the writer himself. Correction, especially at the outset, should be regarded an intrusion rather than an assist. Imagination and creativity are, at best, difficult to evaluate; they are impossible to grade.

The fifth premise is that imaginative writing should be taught only by the teacher with expertise, a teacher who is a creative writer himself. The classroom teacher has often shied away from the challenge because he lacks confidence in his own writing ability, because he hasn't the imagination, or because he hasn't studied the subject or the process formally. The professional writer may, in fact, be the worst teacher of imaginative writing; the classroom teacher, the best.

The professional has already laid out his course and determined his approaches, and he may be unwilling to accept the unfamiliar or encourage the unorthadox. Even if he is willing, students too often model themselves on the master, tending to regard his suggestions as *ex cathedra* pronouncements. There is a certain romance in imagining that if I want to write like Wolfe, Anderson, or Faulkner, I should live and dress like Wolfe, Anderson, or Faulkner. I suspect, though, that retiring to a cold water flat in Brooklyn and scrawling on accountant's ledges propped on an icebox would not result in *Look Homeward Angel Revisited*, or hying off to a rear office in a paint factory would not give me *Winesburg, New York*, nor would seeking out a boiler room in Mississippi put me in touch with *Brave New Yoknapatawpha*. If I would write like Wolfe, Anderson, or Faulkner, I need to be Wolfe, Anderson, or Faulkner. To write imaginatively I only need to be me.

The non-professional writer hasn't to dispel preconceptions about the subject and its limitations. He is less likely to overwhelm the

impressionable student with arbitrary cautions and precautions and more apt to respond to the student and the student's expression. That is not to say that incompetency is a preferred quality in the teacher of imaginative writing, but it is to say that imagination and enthusiasm are more prized than publication and recognition. The student can trifle with habits, techniques, and idiosyncracies of professional writers, but in the end he has to grapple with his own peculiar psyche to effect his own peculiar style. The teacher, meanwhile, provides the atmosphere conducive to creativity and generates ideas to instigate the process.

If any one thing can be said of imaginative writing, it is that the teacher of English has neglected it. And what I have been saying is that the neglect has been due to deceptions that, on the surface, appear altogether reasonable. They are not. If no one type has a monopoly on creativity, imaginative writing should be introduced to every student at every level. If imaginative writing can provide for private aesthetic expression, it should find a place in the curriculum. We have failed to make clear the distinctions that exist between formal and imaginative writing, and we have treated every written composition the same—correcting, grading, affixing appropriate symbols. Finally, we have lacked training and experience as creative writers ourselves, which is to say, we have lacked confidence in our ability to provide leadership and guidance. Once we made the decision not to offer imaginative writing, but that decision is no longer in our hands. Students are petitioning for writing workshops and independent studies, and programs on all levels are reflecting student preference.

Imaginative writing deserves greater attention in the English classroom. The composition of imaginative literature should be seen as at least as important as its appreciation, its synthesis at least as important as its analysis. The miracle of the classroom is that the synthesis can occur there, if only the teacher will encourage it.

CREATIVITY THEORY AND LANGUAGE ARTS

Rodney P. Smith

One of the finest justifications for creativity ever written is to be found in John W. Gardner's *Self-Renewal,* a book which is subtitled *The Individual and the Innovative Society.* In this book, Gardner speaks of the need for society to renew itself, to innovate, and for individuals to be creative. About a third of the way through the book, Gardner writes a statement which poses a question to which this short essay responds. Gardner asks:

> Is it possible to foster creativity? The question is not easily answered. Popular books on the subject seem to be saying that the trait in question is like a muscle that profits from exercise (and the implication is that you too can bulge in the right places).[1]

Gardner goes on to add a statement which is intrinsic to any writing on creativity:

> . . . research workers believe that this trait and the qualities of character, temperament, and intellect that contribute to it are laid down in childhood . . . We know too little about these early influences . . . As far as adults are concerned, it is not certain whether anything can be done . . . But much can be done to release the potential that is there . . . certain kinds of environment smother their creative impulse and other kinds permit the release of these impulses.[2]

Working Definition of Creativity

Thus we have provided ourselves a somewhat direct thesis to follow. That thesis is that creativity is very important to mankind, and that we ought to question, to find out if creativity can be cultivated. The first part of this thesis perhaps needs amplification.

There are several possibilities in a world of inevitable change. One may be, or attempt to be, unbending against change. He may bend with it and flexibly adapt to it; or one may learn to direct change and through innovation learn to create and control change.

A great deal of inventiveness and creativity of the past has been directed toward adaptation to change and creation and the attempt to control change. Mostly, though, this spontaneity, this creativity, this uniqueness and imagination has been an accident of nature. And though scientific interest has been shown in creativity since before 1869[3], even today very little concerted action has been mounted in this area.

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1 Gardner, John W. **Self Renewal.** New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1961. p. 34
2 Gardner, Op. Cit., pp. 34-35

Rodney P. Smith, Assistant Chief of Curriculum and Instruction in the state of Florida, is known as a teacher, lecturer, author of the NCTE book on *Creativity in the English Program,* and as Editor of *Elementary English.*

What is creativity anyway? Words such as divergent, growth, independence, risk-taking, multiple answers, inventiveness, and imaginative come readily to mind. However, Guilford discusses the process of creative thinking in terms of ideation and problem solving, both of which are related to the following little understood modes of thought:

1. Fluency has to do with recall of stored information. A greater or lesser degree of fluency can be noted, but the process of using information "stored" in the brain is a little known operation.

2. Flexibility has to do with transforming one type of information to another. It can be observed that one may classify and reclassify in various orders—e.g. in a list of items. Here again one finds it easier to measure outcomes than to explain the process.

3. Elaboration is best viewed as the old game of *associations*. What is the process of one thought leading to another? Though elaboration may be observed, an understanding of this chain of events is as yet not known.

4. Transformations are viewed as sudden and intuitive shifts, brilliant flashes of insight. The principles and laws surrounding this process are unknown.

5. The phenomenon of incubation is cited by Guilford as being observed by only *one intentional study*. The knack of leaving one's work or partial creation, followed by a period of relaxation of effort, and then the return to fruition, is noted but is not explainable by present research.

A working definition of creativity is given in the book *Creativity in the English Program*. It is as follows:

> . . . a working definition of creativity might be uncovered by examining such processes as the ability to identify problems and to use imagination in seeking unique solutions, the use of divergent thinking, flexibility in adapting to changing situations, and the ability to use evaluative thinking toward new syntheses.[4]

Theory and Practice

It might be well to attempt to present some idea of practice based on creative theory that could be useful to the classroom teacher. Such an idea ought to confront head-on the often misunderstood idea that creativity is almost total permissiveness with neither form not structure. For though such "openness" might lead to creativity, it would be the accidental creativity generated by chaos. And it would seem that mankind is far removed from this early start and is able to begin on another level of creativity somewhat further up the ladder of human concern. Certainly this is not without danger; for structure and form, stemming as they do from cultural mores, have built in restraints, built in walls and

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3 Smith, Rodney P. **Creativity in The English Program.** Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1970. p. 80

4 Smith, Op. Cit., p. 3

fences which are not always supportive of creativity and innovation. Yet it must hastily be said that without form or order little of empirical importance is apt to occur. And it is the change, the accidental inventiveness of the past which we are attempting to transcend. Thus our paradox becomes one of freedom and discipline. It happens that two rather well known theorists have addressed themselves to this problem. One is Alfred North Whitehead in a work called "The Rhythmic Claims of Freedom and Discipline."[5] A second work is that of Carl R. Rogers, "Toward a Theory of Creativity"[6]. Let us see if these authors provide further explications, helpful theories, and directions toward practice.

Whitehead's ". . . Freedom and Discipline"

It is Whitehead's belief that three requirements must be met in the mastery of any field of endeavor. These are interest, discipline, and freedom. No student is apt to devote his energies to that in which he has no interest. That which we hope a student will master must forever draw the student to the stage where he wants to fully comprehend it. Yet full comprehension and eventual mastery of anything entagles the student in a sticky web of technicalities and laborious study. This is the discipline of which Whitehead writes. From this inital interest leading to a self-committed adherence to discipline, the student goes on to practice of a skill or a lifetime endeavor. His self-earned deeper insight now provides him freedom because he now has control over that which he hoped to master. Whitehead's theory of learning, then, requires that, in order to attain mastery, one must pass from interest through discipline to freedom.

D. S. Robinson[9], in commenting on this, maintained that in actuality a cyclical theory of learning was involved. For as a student advances he must feel progressive stages of freedom as he goes along. His interest, too, must be maintained. As Robinson states:[10]

> Unless interest and freedom are both being satisfied, even while he wrestles with the details, the student will lose his enthusiasm for the subject and his sense of its importance. His work will become an unrelieved and meaningless drudgery. Hence studying a subject must alternate between interest, discipline, and freedom from the beginning to the end.

How the teacher works within the ideas of Whitehead and Robinson is half attained by a knowledge that high student interest must be sought, a knowledge of the student is of vital importance in this regard. This perhaps implies periods of time, necessary space, and teacher freedom for student-teacher conferen-

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5 Robinson, D. S. **An Introduction to Living Philosophy.** New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1932. pp. 38-41

6 Anderson, Harold H. **Creativity and Its Cultivation.** New York: Harpur and Row, 1959.

9 Robinson, Op. Cit.

10 Robinson, Op. Cit., p. 39

ces. Secondly, it implies for the teacher well thought out curricula based on a firm understanding of the skill, or subject, or endeavor at hand. It might imply, thirdly, a combination of technologies, both human and multi media, to provide constant interest. Finally, feedback through student "performance" (for lack of a better word) is needed since the student, according to Robinson must experience accomplished abilities as he goes along.

How such a theory legislates against isolated minutiae sometimes associated with the teaching of English provides too long a discourse for the allowed space, but nevertheless provides much food for thought.

Carl Rogers "Toward a Theory of Creativity"

The second theory which has much to say to teachers of the language arts is that of Carl Rogers in his essay "Toward a Theory of Creativity."[7] In this essay Rogers sees a "desperate social need for creative behavior . . ." and he sets forth a tentative theory of creativity which would seem to be easily adapted to the classroom.

Rogers' theory of creativity cultivation seems to imply that the teacher-learner interaction involves *openness* and a lack of rigidity, a tolerance for ambiguity, the ability to delay closure. Secondly, Rogers gives as a fundamental condition of creativity that internal evaluation, only, is really meaningful to the student. And, thirdly, Rogers maintains that the ability to toy with elements and concepts, though less important than the two previous statements, is a condition for creativity. In this latter consideration, Rogers associates *openness* and a *lack of rigidity* with the ability to play with ideas, shapes, colors, and relationships. For as he says:

> . . . to juggle elements into impossible juxtapositions, to shape wild hypotheses, to make the given problematic, to express the ridiculous, to translate from one form to another, . . . It is from this spontaneous toying and exploration that there arises . . . the creative seeing of life in a new and significant way.[8]

Rogers continues to set the terms for creative growth. These are two—psychological safety and psychological freedom. By psychological safety, Rogers means the acceptance of the individual as of genuine worth. Secondly, he implies a classroom climate in which external evaluation gives way to internal (within the student) evaluation.

Application of Theories

If one were to wish to adapt the theories of Whitehead and Rogers for the English language arts classroom, he might devise a checklist such as this.

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7 Anderson, Op. Cit., p. 69
8 Anderson, Op. Cit., p. 80

Whitehead	*Rogers*
1. interest	1. Student self-criticism based on valid information
2. discipline	2. helps to shape an open and accepting environment
3. freedom	3. which leads to further internal commitment on the part of the student.

Using the Checklist

This checklist would bring the important points of Whitehead's theory of learning and Rogers' theory of creativity together. In this way the classroom teacher or other practitioner would be reminded to include within daily, weekly, and other time spans such considerations as the following:

From Rogers:

1. How may the student become involved in the planning for his learning. It is assumed that students involved in planning might cooperate with the teacher in devising a student-teacher contract wherein student and teacher objectives are spelled out. Such an arrangement would allow for student self-criticism or self-assessment based on the valid information which the student had helped to accumulate.

2. The discussion, hopefully a give and take one between the student and the teacher which would lead to a contract, could create the open and accepting environment. Certainly all along in this process and in the process of number one preceding, there would need to be continued "negotiations." Perhaps certain times could be set for these negotiations.

3. Internal commitment on the part of the student, theoretically, would occur since he has helped to shape the "life" the "classroom climate" which is so important to his existence for a certain time during the day and week.

From Whitehead:

1. Interest of the student would bear heavily on the student's curriculum. This would be what we often call individualized instruction.

2. The discipline or the tough parts of this or that particular subject or process would no doubt have to be approached through something like independent study on the part of the student.

3. The freedom which a student would feel would come about because he was able to do things better, or do things which he had not done before at all. This last category places great demands on the teacher and requires a great wealth of things to do which tie in with the multitude of steps in any topic or process.

Such a design, as conceived by Dr. James E. Miller and reported in *Creativity in the English Program*[11], addresses itself to

[11] Smith, Op. Cit., p. 38-39

such a combined theory of learning and creativity. In a brief but effective treatise on imagination and the teaching of literature, Miller assumes imagination in the individual. He then sets up a sequence which would be applicable at any level of student growth:

1. The student is exposed to the great variety of stories, fairy tales, myths, and fables of the world and enters into discussion based on his own experiences.

2. Patterns of world literature are related to the student by the student as he is helped to order his own experiences.

3. The student learns to discern and interpret metaphor in his own life, based on his experiences and interest.

4. The student is helped through an open accepting stance on the part of the teacher to see the multitude of possibilities in his own imagination, and the imagination of others; he learns to produce and be open to divergent thought.

5. The student becomes aware of his own style as he recognizes the style of others in thought, speech, and writing.

6. The student learns to contrast and compare reason and imagination. He comes to understand imagination as a way of knowing.

7. The student learns to open the emotional life of the vicarious, to relate, understand, and appreciate the broad play of emotions in literature and in life.

8. Much of what the student begins to order begins to shape his own philosophy of life.

9. At an "advanced level" the student may wish to learn to analyze various literary works and to acquire an understanding of plot, theme, character, mood, setting, and the interaction of these parts. He will probably learn to differentiate between a structured critical approach and the greater whole of *experiencing* the work. These, then, provide a type of sequential curriculum in literature through which student-teacher contracts might be devised. Other sequences could be available to students. In fact, if the student were not interested in any of the available sequences, he might adapt some combination of them to fit his own interests, or completely devise a new sequence with the help of his teacher.

Such suggestions as are given here from theory to practice are not given in any didactic way nor with any sense of pomposity, but are meant to express the beginning of a professional commitment perhaps somewhat deeper than we have heretofore felt. It is a commitment from which the teacher has been held by a number of what can only be called system constraints. Finally, it must be said that in order for teachers to take the leap from creativity theory to creativity practice, the system itself must be open and innovative. When that day finally comes, and it is nearer than most of us think, then the theory and practice of creativity will not only make for renewed educational institutions and creative students but for a more innovative and creative world, not only more capable of survival but more worthy of it as well.

18

COMMUNICATION: A TWO-WAY STREET

Robert Dykstra

A bank teller was given the responsibility of informing a customer that her checking account was overdrawn. He was predictably taken aback when she replied, "How can that be? I still have 25 checks left." The customer's lack of understanding about the relationship between her bank account and the number of checks remaining in her checkbook interfered with the message the teller was trying to communicate, even though the mechanics of the communicative act were handled flawlessly.

Another incident in which communication was something less than perfect involved an English clergyman who delivered a guest sermon at the regular Sunday service of an American congregation, after which he was invited to a parishioner's house for dinner. As he prepared to return to his hotel he commented to the hostess, "You certainly are a homely person." The speaker in this case intended to convey his appreciation for the hostess's gracious hospitality, but it's quite unlikely that the receiver of the message reconstructed the intended meaning correctly.

There are also many examples of breakdowns in communication which result from the extensive use of jargon. A recent want ad read: "*Wanted.* Man to work on nuclear fissionable isotope molecular reactive counters and three-phase cylotronic uranium photo synthesizers. No experience necessary." The jargon so obvious in that example is really not very different from everyday newsworthy phrases such as incursions into Cambodia, strategic withdrawals from Laos, continuing Vietnamization of the war, and ping-pong diplomacy. Unquestionably, communication is hampered by the all too common practice of resorting to catchy phraseology.

Not all difficulties in communication are as frivolous as the examples in the preceding paragraphs would seem to indicate. Tragic examples of communication breakdowns abound. Consider all of the recent failures in communication between whites and blacks, between hawks and doves, between union leadership and business management, between military and civilian authorities, between the national government and the public, between those who are under thirty and those who are over thirty, between parents and children, between faculty members and students, between state legislators and university faculties, and between those who choose to wear their hair long and those who prefer shorter hair styles.

It is interesting to note that communication problems reach all segments of society. A Gallup Poll recently indicated that four out of every ten young Catholic or Protestant clergymen and six out of

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every Jewish clergymen revealed that they had seriously considered leaving the religious life at one time or another. The most common reason cited for leaving the clergy was an increasing difficulty in communicating with parishioners. In a similar vein, baseball fans can readily sympathize with Ron Swoboda, who before being traded by the New York Mets decried Manager Gil Hodge's inability to communicate with his players. As still another example, newspapers recently reported a situation on the campus of North Dakota State University where a professor was under fire for having failed one-half of his students during fall quarter and for having awarded grades of C or better to only 7 out of 55 students. Campus interviews indicated that the professor's difficulties with students could largely be attributed to an inability to communicate. The interesting part of all this is that the professor in question was on the faculty of the Speech and Hearing Department.

The examples chosen to illustrate the widespread nature of ineffective communication can be replicated in the daily lives of everyone. Inability to communicate is the reason given for many of the problems which disturb relationships in the family, the school, the community and in society in general. Although the school is not totally responsible for the high incidence of ineffective communication today, it must share the responsibility. Practically any statement of educational goals includes within it a strong commitment to promoting effective communication skills. Effective communication was certainly subsumed under Principle II "Command of Fundamental Processes" of the well-known seven cardinal principles of education enunciated in 1918. Furthermore, when the NCTE Commission on the English Curriculum in the early 1950's listed as one of the goals of the language arts program "effective use of language in the daily affairs of life," they stressed the importance of using language to communicate.[1] Prospective teachers, when asked what they consider to be the primary goal for teaching the language arts, inevitably list "helping each pupil to learn to communicate effectively."

If schools have accepted the responsibility for teaching students to communicate, they must (particularly in this age of accountability) examine what has gone wrong. Can anything be done to improve the chances that students will develop effective communication skills? An essential first step in the direction of answering this question is a re-examination of what is meant by the term "communication."

Definitions of communication tend to emphasize one of two ideas. On the one hand, thinking about communication emphasizes the transmission of ideas, the imparting of information, or the "sending out" of a message. For example, communication is defined as "the art of making one person's ideas the property of two or more." The Standard College Dictionary states that to communicate is "to convey knowledge—to tell, as one's thoughts."[3] In the same dictionary communication is defined as "the act of imparting or transmitting." William Moulton in the 1970 Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education defines human communication as "the transmission of information from one person to another."[5]

Each of these definitions stresses the transmission of ideas with less attention given to the responsibility of the receiver, the one for whom the message is intended. A cartoon encountered recently illustrates clearly the problems surrounding this view of communication.[2:74] The cartoon depicts a glum-looking husband in one room, an equally glum-looking wife and her mother in another room, the two rooms connected by a large open doorway. Each room has a telephone, the two phones connected by a telephone line; each room has a large megaphone; each room has a blinking signal light such as those used aboard naval vessels; each room has a complete set of code flags and pennants such as those used aboard sailing ships; and each room has a pair of flags similar to those used by the Navy in its semaphore system of signaling. The caption under the cartoon reads "Lord knows we've tried, Mother. We just can't seem to communicate." This couple had tried a variety of techniques for transmitting messages but had found out that this was not sufficient to insure communication.

The other general definition of communication is well stated by Frank Smith: "Communication requires the *interaction* of two participants—the transmitter and receiver of a message. The receiver whether reader or listener has to make a contribution at least as great as that of the transmitter if communication is to occur."[7:13] The Encyclopedia Britannica also stresses the interaction between sender and receiver and emphasizes that communication can be evaluated on the basis of the effects of the message. In their view of communication, the Britannica authors discuss a process which encompasses a number of components. The first component consists of an idea in the mind of the sender which may or may not be sufficiently clear to be communicable to the receiver. The second component is the formal expressions or the encoding of the idea, which constitutes the message. The third component is the receiver's interpretation or decoding of the message. These first three components correspond roughly to the first definition of communication which places the emphasis on the transmission of ideas. According to this second view of communication, however, the process doesn't end there. The fourth component consists of the receiver's response to the message, reactions which may or may not come to the attention of the sender of the message. If they do, they constitute a fifth component, the feedback. The sender's interpretation or decoding of this feedback to his message would then complete one round of the communication cycle.

The re-examination of the contrasting definitions of communication is helpful because it is likely that many problems can be attributed to the simplistic view that communication is more or less a one-way street. Parents and their children take turns lecturing one another about the evils of drugs and alcohol. Adults and youth talk at one another about the merits and the shortcomings of the system without ever listening to what the other has to say. Teaching, at the college level at least, still is most often characterized by the lecture method.

It is also likely that the first view of communication, that of transmitting ideas, is the prevalent view in many, if not a majority, of

elementary school classrooms. In this view of communication, primary attention is given to accurate transmission of the message and effective communication, therefore, is that which is accurately encoded and decoded. Instructional practices in a classroom which views communication in this manner are predictable.

For example, the language arts program is likely to focus on the mechanics of expression. Attention may be given to teaching the standard dialect on the assumption that Standard English is essential for unambiguous expression of ideas. Some teachers today, for example, still insist that children should learn to avoid the double negative because it confuses the meaning of utterance. Its interesting that people continue to hold this view in the face of overwhelming empirical evidence that persons don't ordinarily reach for the jar when the child says, "I don't want no mustard." Furthermore, in the classroom which emphasizes communication as a process of transmitting information, children are likely to practice giving short reports on which they are evaluated according to how well they organize the report, how well they use standard dialect, how well they have learned the techniques of public speaking, and how well the information has been presented. In this type of classroom there is likely to be no real audience. That is, no one is expected to respond, no one is expected to interact, no one is expected to agree or disagree with what is said or to ask for clarification and expansion of any ideas which have been expressed. Any feedback which may be requested typically deals with the speaker's performance and not with the ideas presented. Feedback is likely to consist of "he said 'ah' quite a bit; he didn't stand on both feet; he used a pleasing voice; he spoke so that everyone could hear; he used or did not use slang; he spoke in complete sentences; and he did or did not talk with confidence." Group oral language activities which stress interaction such as conversation, discussion, drama, or debate are less likely to be emphasized to any degree.

Although in this view of communication the majority of the responsibility seems to lie with the speaker, there is inherent in the concept of transmission the necessity of the listeners' decoding the message accurately. Therefore, the curriculum may include lessons in listening but these lessons are likely to stress such skills as listening for the main idea or listening for some sort of specific information. Listening tapes may be utilized since there is no real expectation of interaction or an interchange of ideas. The listener is charged with the task of getting information and is generally not responsible for providing feedback to the speaker. Similarly, the reading program is likely to emphasize accurate decoding of the printed page and literal comprehension of what is found there. Material to be read is selected because of its potential contribution to the development of reading skill rather than for its contribution to stimulating thinking among readers.

Just as in the oral language program, instruction in written language is likely to emphasize the mechanics of writing. If communication is to take place, if an idea is to be transmitted accurately, it is

essential that the message be accurately encoded. Much of formal grammar instruction is predicated on the assumption that such instruction has a positive influence on composition skills. Pupils are asked to write reports by and large for the teacher and the goal of the lesson is largely one of helping them to master the mechanical aspects of writing. Seldom is writing done in which there is a real opportunity for an interaction to take place between the writer and the reader. Teacher comments, if any, are likely to focus on sentence construction, spelling, or the mechanics of punctuation. Relatively little attention is paid to what the pupil has to say. Perhaps teachers in classrooms such as those described agree with Paul Roberts, who, in a speech before the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English in 1968 deplored the fact that in the few decades previous the subject matter of English had more and more become the child himself. In this speech Roberts said,

> "We earnestly pursue George Robertson, third grader, begging him to share with us his views on war and peace, the value of poetry, the relative worth of cats and dogs, the desirability of being the oldest child, the youngest child, or the only child in the family. This may have some use in getting him started in writing, but it has no other use. The views of George Robertson, third grader, are of very little interest on any subject whatsoever, except perhaps whether he has to go to the bathroom. And furthermore, never will be unless early on we start putting information into George instead of forever trying to pull it out of him. The business of English is not to ascertain what he thinks but to make available to him some of the things that other people have thought and written, not in the spirit of indoctrination but in that of education."•

It might be added parenthetically that perhaps we have convinced all too well the George Robertson's in our elementary classroom that they have nothing of value to say. Perhaps we have also convinced the George Robertsons' in elementary classrooms that their classmates have nothing of value to say. Moreover, perhaps we have never convinced them otherwise as they grew older. An unwillingness on the one hand to express ideas and an unwillingness on the other hand to listen to other people's ideas are major factors in the general breakdown in communication which seems to prevade society.

Now how does the classroom in which communication is viewed as an interchange of ideas differ from the classroom just described, one in which communication is viewed as a process by which information is transmitted? Accuracy of encoding a message to be communicated is still important and instructional time is still devoted to the mechanics of written composition. There is also likely to be some instruction in helping children to acquire the standard dialect and to master the art of unambiguous oral composition. However, many aspects of the program are likely to be quite different.

The receiver in this second view of communication has a substantially different expectation of his role. The receiver's responsibility goes far beyond accurate perception of what is spoken or written, and is not so much one of "getting the message" as it is of interacting with the sender, providing feedback, asking for clarification or expansion of what has been said or written, and, in general,

being an active participant who shares equally with the sender responsibility for whether or not communication takes place.

In classrooms which emphasize this interactive aspect of communication, oral reporting is replaced or supplemented to a major extent by group discussion, conversation, debate, and other types of group interaction. Actual instruction is provided in the dynamics of the group process, in learning how to become a contributing member of a discussion group. In all of this, the mechanics of the transmission play an important but a subordinate role to the interchange of ideas. In general, much interaction takes place between and among students and the teacher's role as receiver in the communication process is minimized.

When oral reporting is practiced the goals of the lesson are substantially altered. The feedback which is expected from the audience deals primarily with what is said and less with the mechanics of reporting. Furthermore, any "standards" which are developed to help aid the evaluation of the quality of reporting are supplemented by standards which emphasize the listener's role. If attention is given to the acquisition of standard English by those students who speak a non-standard dialect, equal attention is given to helping students to realize that what is said is of far more consequence than how it is said. In this regard, great importance is attached to the child's developing a positive attitude toward himself and others. Since communication is not likely to take place in the absence of mutual respect on the part of the communicants, the human relations aspect of communication receives major emphasis.

The teaching of communication can doubtless be improved by emphasizing that communicating is indeed a "two-way street." Jean Little[4:132] very eloquently captures the essence of what this paper has tried to say in a poem titled "Communicating."

Communicating's more than merely talking

Opens the door.

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LET 'EM TALK

Richard L. Knudson

Want to solve your language arts problem the easy way, the only way? I know that panaceas are often offered, but here's a proven program which fosters growth in all of the language arts. And the kids enjoy it.

When the author taught in South Paris, Maine, he authored a Title III E.S.E.A. proposal entitled "Specialized Language Activities for the Rural Disadvantaged." It was first funded in 1967 and is presently being continued by local funding on an expanded basis which includes the middle grades. The program was developed originally for slow secondary students who were potential dropouts. The students participate in groups working on interest-centered units which has as the culminating activity the production of a short skit for videotape. The students form the production team, and all positions on the team rotate regularly. Thus, a student might be camerman on one segment and talent on the next. All participate in the development of the shooting script.

The shooting script requires research which could have team members in the library or in the community consulting various resource possibilities. The script is complete except for lines to be memorized; therefore, when a student is the talent, he must use his own language ability to communicate.

After a segment has been taped, the students view and discuss it. They readily see technical errors and often spot errors made in language use. Technical excellence is not a goal of the program, but students often insist upon redoing a tape.

The main object of the Specialized Language Activities approach is to provide a relaxed atmosphere which will encourage the students to use the language orally. A great deal of research shows that when skill in one of the language arts is developed, then the others will also improve. This program maintains that speaking (oral language) is the most attractive and should receive the emphasis in schools.

It is not meant to create the illusion that the students in the program do no reading or writing. A classroom library of high interest books is available, and the students are expected to be reading one. They do not, however, have to "do something" after reading a book. Often they will share the book with the teacher or students in a role-playing situation. Writing is handled mainly with a journal in much the same way described by Daniel Fader in *Hooked on Books*. Students fill a set number of pages in the journal each week. That they

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improve in writing skill is testimony to the theory of learning to write by writing. Of course, the group work in preparing the shooting script also provides opportunities to practice these skills.

Some units which have proved popular have concerned crime, parent-child relationships, local job opportunities, entertainment, comedy, and politics. After a class had chosen crime, they broke it up into the following study units: shoplifting, drugs, car stealing, and murder. Research sent them to the library to consult newspapers, magazines, and books. They also contacted state and local police as well as interviewing area merchants. The final tape on shoplifting had the production crew on location in a local drug store, the jail, and the courtroom. It is not too difficult to imagine the variety of high interest learning experiences which took place, and all of these experiences provided opportunities to use language on an expanded basis in a realistic situation.

The federal project was the subject of detailed research over a three year period.[1] Attention was given to obtaining control groups which were of similar ability yet enrolled in traditional English programs. Data gathered show that the experimental groups displayed significant growth in language skills (speaking, writing, and reading) when compared with the control groups. Even though no formal instruction in usage, reading, or composition took place, the Specialized Language Activities youngsters made progress in these areas beyond expectations.

The success of the Specialized Language Activities program has prompted the school officials to extend and expand the program back to the middle grades. Some modifications had to be made, but the original concept is still the same. Teachers at this level find that the groups forming the production teams work better if there are only five members. The students have readily adapted to the concept of finding a topic of mutual interest and then pursuing it to the point of writing a shooting script. The developmental reading program has been separated from this program as it is locally felt that a more formal approach to reading is necessary at that level. Teachers are pleased with the progress students are making in the language arts, and they frequently comment upon the attitudinal changes taking place.

Students participating in the Specialized Language Activities program are developing positive attitudes toward self, peers, and school. The program gives them the opportunity to take considerable responsibility for their own education. Student groups make many decisions concerning the direction for the unit under study. Couple this decision-making responsibility with the numerous opportunties to view oneself, and the result is an improved self-image. Students have improved attendance and performance in other classes seems to be up.

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1 One year of this research is discussed in the author's article "The Effect of Pupil Prepared Videotaped Dramas Upon the Language of Selected Rural Children." **Research in the Teaching of English**, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1971.

Role-playing in language arts really is not anything new. The use of videotape and a full-time commitment to a program which allows students to work in groups upon something which really interests them is new—in practice if not in theory. Curriculum researchers have long realized that existing language arts programs are ineffectual in really making a difference in the way a child uses the language. It appears that we must try something else if we are to educate. This writer feels that a program such as that described here is a logical course for curriculum revision to follow.

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CREATIVE DRAMATICS: FIELD OF THE FUTURE

Sheila Schwartz

A look of horror and incomprehension sweeps across the face of the boy playing the condemned man. "But I thought I got life imprisonment," he says bleakly. He believes completely that this is happening to him; the condemned man's fate is his.

This is but one episode from two remarkable films, DRAMA I and DRAMA II (Available for $50 Rental from Time-Life Films, Inc.) produced by BBC to show the extraordinary growth which creative dramatics has had in recent years in the English school curriculum.

These excellent films provide one of the best orientations for American secondary school teachers about the ways in which creative dramatics can be used in the classroom. The film shows four different classroom situations; four different schools; four different grade levels; but in each of these situations we see teachers who have adopted the philosophy that the teacher's prime role in the classroom should be that of director rather than actor. These four teachers illustrate the idea that the teacher's role should be primarily to elicit the talent, thinking, originality, and creativity which lie within each child and can be brought to the fore if he is given the motivation and setting in which to function.

The techniques of creative dramatics become a philosophy which affects every aspect of classroom life. First, let us consider the role of the teacher. The teacher functions as director rather than as central actor, but this shift of function in no way diminishes his importance in the learning situation. It restores a natural balance which has long been needed.

The teacher is needed as prime mover. In each of the incidents of the drama films, it is the teacher who establishes the framework through her questioning. Once the framework has been established, the choices becomes the students'. At that point the teacher's responsibility is not, as in the traditional classroom, to cover a specific subject or to maintain discipline. It is, instead, to function as facilitator and stimulator. It is the teacher, again in a role of great importance, who arbitrates, questions, moves the action forward, and plays a role in the dramatic situation, if this is called for.

Where does the teacher find the situation to be dramatized? Anywhere and everywhere. It is like anything else; once a teacher knows what he's looking for, he finds many examples of it. In one of the DRAMA excerpts, the teacher asks a group of boys if they would like to dramatize something that happened long ago or in the present time. As we might expect, the boys pick the contemporary world.

Sheila Schwartz, Professor of English Education at State University College, New Paltz, has published over fifty articles and three books, the most notable of the latter being *Teaching the Humanities: Selected Readings.*

Any English teacher who has seen how much more interested students are in current literature than in the old workhorses of the past, would expect this choice.

Then the teacher sets this group of boys the task of finding some situation in which there would be all males. They came up with the idea, a gang of criminals. When she asks them further what crime they are contemplating, they decide they will plan and execute the assassination of the President of the United States. And then they are off.

This situation comes from current events as does the final episode in the films in which the setting is Vietnam. In this happening, South Vietnamese villagers must decide whether or not to turn a fugitive member of the Vietcong over to the Americans. The conflict arises from the fact that they like neither the Vietcong nor the Americans. After the basic situation has been established, the dramatization begins.

The problem situations which are the core of creative dramatics can also be derived from literary works. One of the episodes in the film deals with Juliet's torment before she takes the drug given to her by Friar Lawrence. She fears the drug; suppose it does not work, suppose it kills her. But she fears marriage to Paris even more than the drug. As with all of these situations, much talk precedes the actual acting out.

Moral, social, and psychological issues can also provide the basic situation. One such episode in the films concerns the reactions of a group of children to one of them who is a boaster.

Either teacher or students can provide the basic situation from which the improvisation grows. At the beginning the teacher will have most of the responsibility for this, but with practice the students will be able to take over. It is merely a question of familiarizing them with the goals and techniques of this new approach to school work.

The role of the student also changes in the creative dramatics situation. This can best be understood in relation to specific content. Let us look at the literature area, and, in particular at the book *A Separate Peace*. In the most traditional type of class the teacher would lecture on the book. In a less formal one, the class would discuss the book with the teacher with question and answer going only from teacher to individual student and back to teacher. In a still less formal class the larger group might be divided up into smaller groups to discuss the book and this would give a far larger number of individuals the opportunity to participate. All of this procedure, however, would involve discussing the book from the outside: the characters of Gene and Phinny, the World War II setting, the plot of the novel, the private school setting, etc.

However, in creative dramatics, the student can get inside the book and inside the characters. Floren Harper, drama teacher at New Canaan High School, has taught *A Separate Peace* through an inter-

esting role reversal situation (of course this is only one of her strategies). The situation is that Gene, who may or not be responsible for Phinny's injury, must visit Phinny in the hospital to try to make things right. The scene is played without script by students who are familiar with the book. Then the roles are reversed. The boy who played Phinny plays Gene and the boy who played Gene plays Phinny. In addition to greater understanding of the literary characters, the actors develop empathy for them as people and, by extension, achieve greater understanding of other human beings.

In creative dramatics the student does not function merely as actor, as he does if he is working from a published script. He functions both as playwright *and* actor for he is generating the language and movements which help to explain the character.

He is not memorizing the words of someone else. Not that this is necessarily bad. But for too many students the only learning skill which has been utilized in traditional education is the ability to memorize and parrot. This is a second-level of creativity, of problem solving, and it is not enough.

Creative dramatics forces the student to invent, to communicate (after all, another actor is going to react back to his words and movements), to express himself and his ideas. It helps him, in addition, to function completely as an individual within a group situation, probably the most desirable position a human being can attain; that is, doing your own thing within the safety, warmth, and acceptance of the larger group. There's no mystery about this; in any theatrical group enterprise, a person may never lose sight of the others on the stage, no matter how impassioned he may become. In the Vietnamese incident, each participant reacts in a different way to the dilemma. Some want to turn the Communist in; others cannot turn against their brother, despite his political philosophy, to help the foreigners who have destroyed their land. The children react differently from the adults and the men, differently from the women. The total effect is a montage of individual attitudes, a far cry from the traditional classroom in which the only viewpoint which is expressed and accepted is that of the teacher.

In addition to the cognitive, problem solving side of creative dramatics, this technique plays an important affective role. Students learn to work cooperatively in groups. Interaction is fostered rather than the competitive spirit which now predominates in mark-centered classrooms.

Students also learn that each of them is of importance to the group. It is as if character actors were to find that they were as necessary to a film as were the stars. Life situations do not ask IQ's before action is permitted. The assassination episode takes place in a school for boys, described by the announcer as "second string." But that in no way inhibits them from *meaningful* participation. And the boy who plays the assassin is the kind of student who would be rejected by many teachers as insufficiently verbal. Each of these boys is able to feel a sense of purpose. "Every part of the person functions

together as a working unit, one small organic whole within the larger whole of the agreed environment which is the game structure."[1]

Another "affective benefit" of creative dramatics is the fact that it enables students to use their bodies and it thus serves to reduce that false dichotomy between the mental and physical which hampers joy and learning in our schools and which, furthermore, because students are kept in unnatural postures, serves to create discipline problems. Few adults can sit for six hours. Still fewer could survive if they had to sit for six hours in repressive and sterile situations. The vast dropout rate is clear evidence that it is difficult to endure this repression. But creative dramatics gets students out of their seats. The reason is simple; there is no other way to do it.

Movement, body language, nonverbal communication, all of the things teachers are just becoming conscious of, are all part of creative dramatics, for creative dramatics requires "physicalization," that is, thinking and doing with the body. If in some future world teachers started to grade creative dramatics (this horrible possibility is mentioned only for illustrative purposes), students who remain rooted to their seats would be the ones with low grades not, as is now the situation, the ones who receive the highest grades because they appear to listen and give the teacher little trouble. In addition, "physicalization" gives expression to the theory of John Dewey who stated in *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922) that play and games should be an integral part of the school curriculum and not merely used as relief from the other work activities. Play involves the individual completely, as, for example, in a game such as tennis, and it is through using the paradigm of sports that we see the necessity for "physicalization" for complete understanding of any activity.

In its emphasis on the total participation of individuals within a group situation, creative dramatics is probably closer to the field of simulation games than to traditional drama as we have known it. As in simulation games, the "play" element is paramount. The players are deadly serious but they are playing a game which is removed from the greater society and which begins with a problem to be solved.

> It has been said that the educational innovations of the 1960s represent a second more accurate, translation of the principles of educational progressivism into classroom practices, and the development of simulation games would certainly support such an argument. The core principles of the technique—e.g., the active and simultaneous participation of all students in an educational game, with the teacher in the role of aid rather than judge; the internal rather than external locus of rewards, and thus motivation, in a game; and the linking of the student to the outside world through the simulated environment, which, by "reproducing the conditions of real life" within the classroom allows him to practice taking the kinds of roles and making the kinds of decisions he will face in his own later life—can all be traced to one or another of Dewey's works.[2]

In relation to creative dramatics, the teacher changes, the student changes, and the curriculum changes. Problem solving experiences

replace the memorization of facts. After all, what can creative dramatics do with abstract grammar, population and rainfall statistics, or multiple choice vocabulary tests? Methodology also changes; student movement and talk become desired rather than censured behaviors and the teacher who does not and cannot involve the students will be held accountable.

Creative dramatics has links to other emerging human potential and educational movements. It is a technique for confluent education, that is, education which merges the cognitive and affective elements in learning into humanistic education.

A recent book, *Human Teaching for Human Learning*, applies activities used at Esalen Institute to classroom learning. These activities are almost identical with those of creative dramatics. For example, the following activity is suggested in this book for the study of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*:

> Circle of students. In the middle a table with a rubber mallet. Set the problem: "You are a group on an airplane flight who have crash-landed on a remote and unchartered island in the vast Pacific. Your pilot is dead; your radio is dead. No one knows you are missing. This group, as you are now, is there. You are alone on the island. It is your problem." The teacher remains completely silent and assumes the attitude that these students are in that situation. It will take days, but eventually the students will form a government of their own in the same manner as the boys in *Lord of the Flies*.[3]

We are standing on the threshold of a new world of education; we are living through a revolution against the old as demonstrated by dropouts, riots, alienation, boredom, and drugs. If we listen to what students are telling us we perceive that they want a deemphasis on the extrinsic and a new emphasis on the intrinsic value of every individual; an end to meaningless education learned under threat to a new and relevant education which will help young people to understand themselves and other individuals; a change from competition to love, brotherhood, and the communion of human spirits; and a change from the Puritan work ethic to a philosophy of learning through joyous play. The best new teaching method to emerge, which has demonstrably been able to achieve relevance, involvement, and effective sharing of meanings has been that of creative dramatics. Every teacher now going through a teacher training institution should receive extensive experience in its application.

Creative dramatics is a valuable approach to creative writing, to social studies, to literature, to values clarification, to sociology, and probably to many other disciplines. There is no area of the curriculum which could fail to be enriched through the application of this technique.

John Dixon, in *Growth Through English*, a report on the Dartmouth Seminar, sees creative dramatics as evolving naturally, if not impeded by the school, from student "talk." "Talk", he writes, "enters

32

into the whole range of human interaction, and drama builds, from that interaction and talk, images of human existence."[4]

One of the most optimistic notes in contemporary education is this emerging perception. Play, which once was what students did for one-half hour at recess, as much for the relief of the teacher as for their own, has progressed into a means for achieving images of human existence. It is through this kind of encounter experience that teachers and students will be helped to achieve a higher and more satisying level of educational experience.

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RESEARCH AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Roger L. Cayer

Just over ten years ago the National Council of Teachers of English in its *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* concluded that, "a strong national program of research to improve the teaching of English is essential to develop more efficient methods of teaching." This was a forceful recommendation, based as it was on a comprehensive study of the state of English teaching in the United States. Along with the establishment in 1961 of Project English, perhaps the most impressive developments following immediately upon this call for action were the four major research conferences held in 1962 and 1963.

The initial conference at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and that which followed at Allerton Park, Illinois, provided a detailed review of needed research in the teaching of English and assigned priorities to the more pressing problems. Complementing the preceding two, the seminar held at New York University and the San Francisco Conference focused more sharply on the development of workable research designs for the study of English and English education, as well as such related areas as educational testing and psychology. An impressive amount of information was amassed, valuable insights were gained as a result of bringing specialists from different disciplines together, and many carefully reasoned recommendations for action emerged from these conferences.

In spite of these auspicious beginnings, however, it is readily apparent in retrospect that no cohesive research program of national scope has emerged over the past ten years. Promising as they appear to be for the future of English teaching, the achievements toward the goals set by the NCTE a decade ago which are most clearly discernible today are of much more modest dimensions.

Among the notable long-range gains evident at this time is the obvious growth in interest in research on the part of all concerned with English in our schools and also the concomitant fecundity of research activity. Perusal of annual conference programs of the many professional organizations in English reveals that there has been an allotment or progressively more meeting time and the involvement of ever larger numbers of researchers, educators and teachers in joint discussions; pre-convention and regional workshops in research have proliferated; the NCTE's newest journal, *Research in the Teaching of English,* which reviews current research and provides extensive bibliographic aids, is moving successfully into its fifth year of publication; and, ERIC now provides disseminaton services hardly envisioned ten years ago.

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Growth in the amount of research in the teaching of English done in the past few years is another indication of changing attitudes. "Research," asserted George H. Henry in his controversial *College English* article, "English Teaching Encounters Science" (December, 1966), "now seems to be the pole star of improved instruction in English." Reading and language have been particularly rich in research activity, and substantial gains have been made in redefining content, curriculum design and teaching methods in those areas; but most other aspects of English including composition, vocabulary and oral language are also receiving growing attention. Concomitantly, an increasing number of people in the profession, from the eminent to the neophyte, are actively engaged in research. Illustratively, a few that come readily to mind are James Squire and James Wilcox in adolescent literature and reading, Kellogg Hunt and Frank J. Zidonis in the language of elementary and secondary school students, John C. Mellon in language and composition, Janet Emig in written composition, and Walter Loban in oral English.

The broad and complex problem of preparing teachers to teach elementary and secondary school English has also been the subject of extensive research interest and function in the last decade. Largely motivated by the success of and modelled on *The National Interest and the Teaching of English*, several comprehensive state-level studies aimed at gathering essential information about college and university programs of study for the training of teachers, the academic and professional preparation of teachers, and the working conditions of English teachers have been conducted in the past few years. As a result, those concerned with the status of English teaching in such states as Wisconsin, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and New York where such investigations have been carried out now have available to them an invaluable fund of information to form a factual basis for curriculum and administrative changes and provide a firm foundation for future research.[1]

Many experts in the field are of the opinion that research in education is characterized by a superfluity of data gathering at the expense of other more meaningful activity. Many argue this is equally a weakness in research in the teaching of English. "We should," urged David H. Russell in his opening remarks on the purpose of the San Francisco Conference on Research Design and the Teaching of English, "move away from data accumulation and the merely descriptive to develop a theoretical framework within which varied and large-scale research must operate." The dire need for solutions to so many complex problems in the teaching of English most emphatically supports this view.

Data studies should not be disparaged, however, because of their comparative simplicity. This type of research has served the profession well, for it has assured that a growing number of important decisions have been meticulously informed. The constructive reaction

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[1] Edmund J. Farrell's recently published **Deciding the Future** (NCTE, Research Report No. 12, 1971) is an unusual application of this type of research to assess the future of English teaching and thereby suggest necessary changes to meet new demands.

on the part of all concerned to the revelation in *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* that forty to sixty percent of this country's secondary school teachers of English were inadequately prepared is now history. Some responses were immediate and direct, the raising of certification requirements for teaching English by several state departments of certification being a case in point. Remedies for more complex problems revealed in the survey, making provisions for greatly increased in-service education for experienced teachers, for example, required further study before appropriate remedial action could be taken. In any case, whether statistical information directly undergirds necessary decisions or serves as the basis for future study is incidental to the principle of educational change, mainly that sufficient data gathered and interpreted in an orderly and objective manner should inform all attempts at improvement in the teaching of elementary and secondary school English.

Only too often this sound principle is violated in affecting change in English teaching and, in the name of expediency or necessity, administrative authority is substituted for it. But, given the nature of the many formidable problems in education, nothing short of a meticulousness in this matter of completeness and accuracy of information can be tolerated. As Erwin R. Steinberg emphasized in his remarks to the Carnegie Institute Conference on Needed Research in the Teaching of English, "with more exact knowledge available, colleges will be better able to prepare prospective teachers, and administrators and interested citizens will with more confidence be able to distinguish the better from the poorer programs." In addition to these substantial benefits, accumulated data often constitutes an unerringly accurate statement of needed research. The results of the study of the academic and professional preparation of public secondary school teachers of English, *The Teaching of English in New York State* (NYSEC, Monograph 13, 1970), illustrates this point.

Among other things, the survey revealed that of all the college courses taken by the English teachers in their college studies, they judged a course in Shakespeare most valuable in their classroom teaching; knowledge of traditional English grammar was assessed considerably more useful than linguistics; and methods of teaching English and psychology received among the lowest "usefulness" ratings of all. A myriad of questions are raised even by these few items of information. What factors affect a teacher's judgment of a course? What criteria may reasonably be applied in making such an assessment? To what extent do teacher bias, textbooks, curriculum design, substance and quality of college courses taken, or any number of other factors influence what and how a teacher teaches? What is the relationship between psychology and literature? Depending on its nature, how may such a relationship be rendered functional in the English classroom? The list of questions, issues, and problems which can be drawn from data analysis is seemingly endless. Utilized intelligently such information can assist in weighing the significance of research in progress; and, in addition, it is by its very nature clearly suggestive of needed research.

If the strong national research program advocated by the NCTE does indeed materialize, it will undoubtedly incorporate some of the features of what is in some respects perhaps the single most impressive research project in the teaching of English. A million dollar enterprise begun in 1964, the Illinois Statewide Curriculum Study Center in the Preparation of Secondary School English Teachers (ISCPET) involved twenty colleges in a five year research program for the improvement of college curricula for the preparation of secondary school teachers of English. Investigations of such problems as the role of internships in preparing teachers, the efficacy of various approaches to teaching written composition and of differing structures for teaching literature, and the effect on teaching performance of exposure in training to linguistics are but a few of the many studies undertaken as part of this comprehensive project. Significant as the findings which emerge from this complex of investigations may be, its true impact on research in English will undoubtedly be primarily because of its impressive scope and organization.

Current research in the teaching of English is frequently and strongly criticized for its fragmentation, its lack of cohesiveness, its penchant for what Walter T. Petty has characterized as "atomistic and tangential" issues, its failure to carry out enough long-range investigations and, finally, its seeming inability to concentrate sufficiently on basic as against practical problems. ISCPET is most emphatically not a perfect model that would if emulated resolve all difficulties and eradicate all weaknesses in the present research structures; but, given its own shortcomings, it has demonstrated the feasibility of organizing, funding, and completing a vast complex of related research over an extended period of time.

The need for more extended, comprehensive and theoretical research in the teaching of English, great as it is, now is matched by the equally urgent need for more direct application of reliable research findings to inform content and methodology in the classroom, substance and design of curricula and textbooks, and administrative decisions. With the ever increasing volume of research activity on the one hand and the concomitant intensifying of school and classroom problems on the other, improved dissemination of research information has become crucial. Research results must be continually analyzed, assessed and synthesized, with the ultimate goal of assimilation foremost in mind. Technology is already greatly assisting in this endeavor, but equally important are more experts trained to place new findings in proper perspective and to translate emerging theoretical and statistical research knowledge into language and form that renders it readily comprehensible to those best situated to make application. The fact revealed by the aforementioned survey of English teaching in New York State that nearly two-thirds of the English teachers in the State have not studied research as part of their formal college preparation suggests that they may lack the knowledge and skill requisite to intelligent consumption of research, and supports the argument for greater stress on dissemination as part of the total research effort in the teaching and learning of English.

Considerable as it is, the contribution of research to the teaching of English up to the present time must be characterized as more potential than actual. What the years ahead hold will depend largely on the strength of our commitment to the "strong national program of research" envisioned a decade ago. No less an effort than that will suffice, as our present situation clearly demonstrates.

ASKING THE FIRST TWO QUESTIONS

Charles R. Cooper

Asking questions and then responding appropriately to student answers is probably the teacher's most important task in classroom literary study. If the literary text is engaging and the questioning goes well, then a lively and instructive class session is virtually a certainty. We ask questions in order to meet three objectives: (1) to help the student clarify his own personal response to the work, (2) to insure an accurately perceived text, and (3) to teach students *how to read* literature. Any questioning strategy should be rigorously evaluated in terms of these objectives.

Questioning strategy implies some notion about a sequence or hierarchy of questions. The sequence we customarily use should be one which holds up well for students over several months of literary study. It should be one that creates the best possible classroom climate for literary study. It should recognize that responding to a work of literature can be a complex aesthetic-psychological experience for the reader. It should recognize that many times the student's main initial concern with the work will be in clarifying a deeply-felt, perhaps even painful and confusing, personal response. Finally, the questioning sequence should be one which makes it possible for the student to persist at the task of learning to read fiction insightfully and responsively.

In this article I want to outline a questioning strategy which fulfills all of the above objectives, but I want to preface that by pointing out that the most appropriate response to a text may be either silence or a buzz of unfocused conversation. (We probably should resist the impulse to "get to work" on every selection as soon as we have presented it to the class.) There are several ways to encourage this sort of informal response in the classroom. For example, if we know we want to return to a significant story or poem, we could read it aloud toward the end of the period, permitting the unfocused buzz or the silence to carry us to the bell. Then we could return to the text at the beginning of the next class, reading it aloud again, with the intent of using the whole class period for focused class or small-group discussion.

I would propose two general principles for asking questions of the students about literary texts: (1) questions should always follow immediately after a reading or re-reading (preferably an oral interpretation by the teacher or a student) of the text and (2) questions should always begin with students' responses to the work.

Principle 1 reminds us that we do not have to suffer desultory class discussion and vague responses to questions resulting from

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failure to complete homework reading or from weak memory of past reading. This approach would limit classroom literary study largely to poetry, song lyrics, short stories, and short plays; but I am convinced that limitation could only improve most instruction I observe. I think we can teach the reading of long plays with short plays, novels with short stories. These longer works can then be read outside of class as parallel homework to the reading and study of shorter selections in the classroom.

Principle 2 reminds us that we should always start where students are in relation to the text at their first reading or subsequent re-readings of it. They will most surely all be at different places on all those occasions. Admittedly, our aim is always the fullest possible comprehension of the particular text and some lasting lessons about how to read that particular *kind* of text; but the best place to begin moving toward that is with the *student's* immediate relation to the text, his own personal response to it and his own estimate of its worth and significance. Of course, his response may be based on a *mis*-reading of the text and his estimate of its worth may be at odds with what we believe and what all the critics and scholars have said; but he can be led to see that quicker—and perhaps even accept it—if we show that we value his initial response.

What this approach means in practice is that we avoid initial questions like "What is the theme of this poem?" or smaller-scale, inductive-type questions like "Who is the speaker?" "What tone of voice is he using to address his audience?" "What is the image in Line 3?" These are *crucial* questions, but they are best moved to naturally as a way to clarify students' responses. In place of these questions I want to propose two very simple initial questions:

> *Initial Question* 1:
> What do you think (or feel) about this selection?
>
> *Initial Question* 2:
> Why do you think (or feel) that?

Initial Question 1 can take several forms:

Mark, what do you think about this poem?
Debbie, what did you feel as you were listening to this song lyric?
Terry, what value does this short story have for you?
Cindy, do you think you might want to read this poem again?
Dave, have your feelings changed about this poem since we last read it?
Laurie, how would you express your response to this short story?
Steve, do you have anything to say about this poem?

Initial Question 2 produces answers which will lead off in one of two directions: (1) to the student's own experience and (2) to the text itself. Direction 1 permits us to use literature as a springboard for assisting the student in clarifying his current values. This direction has a rich potential in English education, a potential not fully developed and utilized by many teachers. Assisting with value clarification requires great skill and patience, and it is too complex an approach to describe here. Interested teachers should look at a fascinating book by Louis E. Raths and others, *Values and Teaching* (Co-

lumbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1966). Direction 2 is the one which permits us to teach students about reading literary texts; however, in class we should be equally interested in both directions. The student *values* the text initially in terms of his own experience, and we can get him to analyze and explore willingly only that which he values.

So if we ask Initial Quesetion 2 (Why do you feel that way? or Why do you say that? or How would you explain your response?), the student may take Direction 1 (the value-clarifying direction) and say, "Because when I was little I got lost in a big crowd once and I remember how scared I was" or "The main character is exactly like someone I hate." Or he may take the Direction 2 and say, "Because I didn't like the last line. I thought it was a poor way to end the poem." Now it is this second direction which can always lead back to the text, if we are alert and clever. And here is the place for the much-discussed inductive questioning strategy which leads to a more accurate perception of the text and to an understanding of various concepts from literary criticism. (see "The Inductive Teaching of English" in Lois S. Josephs and Erwin R. Steinberg, *English Education Today*. New York: Noble and Noble, 1970). But notice that we do not *begin* with rigorous inductive questioning.

My research and my experience convinces me that a class of twenty to thirty stulents in an informal teacher-led discussion of their responses to a literary text will eventually (usually in one class period) refer to the text in enough different ways to permit us to explore it rather thoroughly in the way the New Critics have taught us so well, touching such topics as the identity of the speaker, diction, imagery, mood, tone, point of view, theme, overall structure or pattern, rhythm and rhyme, and the relations of form and content. Three of the best sources of review of these aspects of literature remain John Ciardi, *How Does a Poem Mean* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959); Cleaneth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, third edition, 1960); and Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press Phoenix Book, 1967).

Leading a whole-class discussion, then, requires that we accept the student's initial expressed response and then move on from that by skillful questioning to help him extend his personal response and clarify it in relation to a more accurately perceived text.

I should add that students can learn to ask of each other all the questions I have proposed here. My own preference is for a great deal of student-centered small group work.

SEQUENCING IN ENGLISH K-12: A MODEL

David R. Wood

Continuous progress, individualizing instruction, and accountability are our current catch words and we are often given to understand that they obviously must fit within *some* encompassing framework. In another mode of speaking I recently heard the teacher described within this framework as a tour guide who hands out maps of the terrain on request. Yesterday I read that the curriculum is like a bikini—it reveals the interesting and covers the vital. And so it goes. I think all of us might feel like the buffalo in Charles Keller's story. After the woman tourist remarked in wonderment to her husband about those mangy beasts over there, the buffalo turned to *her* friend and said, "I think I just heard a discouraging word."

Sequence, sequencing, sequenced. What kind of reasonable framework *can* someone concerned about articulation, continuous progress, individualizing instruction, and accountability in English work in? But first we must operate under some assumptions:

1. There is a logical base on which the curriculum can be built.
2. Content grows out of goals rather than the other way around.
3. Seldom can one part of the curriculum be altered without affecting other parts.

And of these three come:

4. Curriculum change may and can be brought about through revisions in content, in organization, in use of technology, in methodology, and in materials.
5. Evaluation should be in terms of the degree to which objectives have been met rather than in terms of the measurement of subject content knowledge.
6. The teacher and the student are important influences in the design of our curriculum.

And finally:

7. There are always external forces or pressures which affect the specific way in which the goals and objectives of a school system will be arrived at in any particular school or school system at any particular time.

And now the model: (which is currently projected for a K-3, 4-6, 7 and 8, 9-12 system but might work as well in any number arrangement).

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Essentially we see the English curriculum as a spiral curriculum, K-12, in major strands of literature, composition, speaking and listening, reading, and language. This conforms with the State syllabi approach, that is, a vertical organization, as compared with the grade level, or horizontal approach of long (and honorable?) standing.

The major hills on this curriculum plain for students come at breaks in our system when the student essentially changes to another school at the end of what we term primary (K-3), intermediate (4-6), junior high (7 and 8), and at the first year one spends in the high school. The hills are objective measures—at some time during the year in what we *used* to call grades 3 and 6—a standardized reading test. At what we *used* to call grades 8 and 9—a standardized commercially available test in English at eight, the SWAT in English at 9. We view these last two as placement examinations, the first two as informational examinations.

Successfully handling the first year of high school examination allows the student a choice of semester organized electives for the balance of his mandated time requirements. The electives have typical titles—Black Literature, College Composition, Popular Fiction. They are evaluated yearly and revised, demoted, or retained depending upon student interest and teacher estimation. In a typical year one might cut five and add three. The English Comprehensive as well as the State Wide Achievement Test in English can be taken, therefore, anytime during the high school years.

What does this system allow? Alternatives.

What does this system require? Stated Goals.

We believe that one creates a climate for change by indicating that change is accepted and encouraged, by developing new ways of working for the teacher, and by freeing the individual from outmoded rules and regulations. To do this we believe in creating models that represent departures from the more conventional and/or the existing forms of schooling. One example at the high school level would be a School Without Walls.

We believe one should provide resource persons who can serve as change-agents in individual schools, such as reading teachers in the elementary schools. We also believe in actively seeking outside funding of new projects and outside consultant staff in an effort to develop new patterns of teaching, learning and/or organizing, such as PROJECT READ and the TTT PROGRAM at both the elementary and junior high level.

Thus there are two ways of working at a sequence like this, within and without. Some ways of working within and without have been listed. Other ways more specifically within the school setting are these:

1. Shortened school day	— Late arrival, early dismissal
2. Special programs	— Independent study; extensive work in an area of interest to the pupil (all-day program in art, for example). Evening school.
3. Assignments to specific teachers	— To make for student and teacher compatibility
4. Alternative routes to study topics	— Contract, independent study, lecture, etc. In the junior high school this could be arranged by organizing some pupils in one way and other pupils in a different way. In the senior high school, this could be arranged by teaming teachers so each could offer his own specialty.
5. Permitting the student to complete work in an area after a semester or similar short-term arrangement.	— The five week mini course, the half semester.

All of this should lead from group instruction to individualized instruction, from teacher as dispenser of knowledge to teacher as facilitator (tour guide?), from homogeneous grouping to flexible grouping.

With a flexible daily time period rather than a standard daily time period, flexible time blocks rather than standard time blocks, a variety of electives for shorter periods rather than a limited number of electives for long periods, perhaps that fixed body of knowledge for all to learn, can become a content based on student needs and interests where the emphasis is on learning how to learn.

Sequence, sequencing, sequenced. Take heart fellow buffalo, the day of the bikini is coming.

MAKING SENSE OF BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Frank J. Tutera

Behavioral objectives and accountability may well have potential future shock value for teachers generally; but it is especially incumbent on the language arts teacher—shocked or not—to make sense of the whole issue. This article—which may have little to commend it than that it is by a classroom teacher talking to fellow-teachers—is focused on two questions: "What are the considerations that require us to make sense?" And, "What should we do about the behavioral objective—accountabilty trend?'

The trend received good coverage in the Fall '71 issue of NCTE's *English Education*. In the lead article, Jewett covered its history and considered some of the problems.[1] Ferguson and Blake vigorously debated the question in the same issue.[2] Flanagan, Shanner and Mager have produced a behavioral objectives manual for the language arts.[3]

The backgrounds and some of the issues have been amply covered, but a few words on the subject may be useful here. Local boards, mindful of mounting costs, are beginning to question whether schools are in fact achieving the goals they say they are. It has been proposed, therefore, to set performance goals or behavioral skills objectives for the various subjects, and to measure student attainment in these goals—patently, to hold school systems and their faculties accountable for success or failure. It is further proposed that educational auditors be appointed to assist and confer in the assessment of goals.

These proposals have caused some confusion and raised some hackles. What do we do about them?

One thing we should *not* do is to succumb to the temptation to to stand pat. Re-appraisal and self-analysis, characteristic of healthy societies and professions, is certainly to be encouraged as consistent with the traditions of a vigorous and responsive system of education. The current talk about objectives and accountability is, I feel sure, just one more manifestation of a tradition as deep in American Culture as Methodist Revivalism, "taking stock", and soul searching.

Nor should we reduce the whole affair to a bond-issue or budget fight, with economy-minded tax-payers wielding the club of "behavioral objectives" over the heads of teachers brandishing the sword of "quality education." The result would only be further polarization of teachers and the public and aggravation of the ecology with the litter of handbills.

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We should look realistically at the threatening or negative aspects of the trend and "make sense" of its demands. Jewett observes, "Accountability to students and the public for results in education has potential future shock for many teachers because its introduction will sock it to our traditional ways of teaching and evaluating."[4] Jewett's observations should not cause undue alarm. We have always been accountable to students and their parents; we are accountable when we have to explain why we mark a paper in a certain way, when we justify a grade, or have to tell why we are or are not reading a given book. We need be concerned only if we are guilty of "traditional ways of teaching and evaluating." "Traditional ways" in this sense seems to mean to teach a book or to engage in activities without apparent concern for the over-all objectives of the program or the needs of the children, and to test for items or skills which have little relevance to these needs or objectives. If a teacher is guilty of such practices, she should reform immediately—without waiting for the millenium of behavioral objectives—though it is hard to understand what the administrators and supervisors were doing while the teacher floundered around. If such misguided practices are so widespread or of such long standing as to become "traditional", then it is time for a behavioral program—but I would like to see the evidence first.

Implicit in the behavioral objective-accountability trend is the threat that unless the teacher voluntarily marshals her work into line with agreed-upon goals, and polices the results with business-like efficiency, an educational auditor will bring her to account before her supervisors and the local board, and force her either to reform or to resign. Under the cloud of such a threat, it would behoove the teacher to know well what she is doing and why. Is this demand so excessive, after all? Shouldn't we all know what we are doing and why? Our job is to teach the arts of communication to children, a task which involves, among other things, coherence, articulation, focus on a thesis or objectives, the selection of the means and the approach consistent with a controlling purpose, awareness of the audience and consciousness of the word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence impact upon it. It would be ironical if, as experts in communication, we could not mobilize our disciplines in our own area of specialization. We have no right to demand unity, clarity, and emphasis in a paragraph or essay if we cannot achieve them in our own daily, unit, or semester plans. There is no need for alarm in the demand for clarity of aim and performance in the behavioral objective trend.

But there is a danger if the objectives are imposed *unilaterally*, whether by the kids, the teacher, or the school officials. Much of the bad teaching is a result of unilateral imposition. We all know of courses that go on unchanged year after year because a teacher has become overly-fond of a certain group of books, topics, or activities. All too familiar are the "mini-courses" and "electives" that pander to a low level of student interest and a desire for an easy grade. We also know about economy-minded boards of education that have put the axe to advanced placement, remedial reading, language courses in the junior high, and other such alleged "frills." We can meet the danger

46

of such unilateral impositions by policing ourselves better, as indiduals and as faculties, and by continuing to fight for teacher participation in administrative policy.

Two matters remain about which we must make sense. One of these I shall refer to as "shopping for nostrums." The other, for lack of a better term, I shall call "primer-izing."

I foresee a spate of books (or non-books)—with little to commend them but the desire to tap a new market—on behavioral objectives for the language arts. Shopping for nostrums, the harried teacher may spend hard-earned dollars for non-books which are little more than separate lists of short-term (transitional) and long-term (terminal) objectives. Since the teacher is left to discover for herself what short-term goals culminate into what long-term ones, or what means or activities should be used to achieve them, or how they should be evaluated, it is hard to see what earthly use such non-books have.

But it is not only the teachers who may be exploited. Local school officials may also be vulnerable in the nostrum-shopping spree, for the "educational auditor" they may retain, may be little better than a quack. Considering the enormousness of the task the auditors may be called upon to undertake, the intimate knowledge they are expected to absorb about programs and children they have never seen before, and the short-time basis on which they are expected to perform miracles of assessment and evaluation, we would do well to scrutinize their bonafides carefully, and be ready to call the officials themselves to a public accounting.

Finally, we must consider the dangers of "primer-izing." There is the danger that teachers and school systems, under the pressures of "auditing," may so simplify their programs in order to make them pass muster that they may squeeze all the life out of them down to readily perceivable and testable goals. To the question, "Won't the accountability system lead to an over-emphasis on factual learning as contrasted to under-emphasis on humanistic and aesthetic goals in literature?" Jewett replies: "I fear that this under-emphasis might occur unless we prepare more specific behavioral objectives and valid measuring instruments in the areas of humanities."[5] I believe that Jewett may be under-estimating the danger.

The demands of auditing may cause us to lose sight of an essential aspect of the nature of the communication arts. What that aspect is may be brought into bold relief by Robert Frost's laconic definition of art as freedom in harness; the artist, in submitting to the restraints and disciplines of the art form, achieves the joy of mastery that makes being in harness a kind of freedom. We are reminded of it in Wordsworth's "Nuns Fret Not in Their Convent's Narrow Room." We know, too, that art and the communication of an idea is sometimes a frustrating experience, both for the artist and his audience. Who hasn't heard the story of A. E. Housman's agonizing search for just the right word to fill in a blank in one of his poems? Who has not seen the fractured left arm of Michaelangelo's exquisite statue of David which

the master himself smashed in his anger at not achieving a desired perfection? The frustrations of struggling with form are an essential part of artistic creation even at the simplest levels. If we embrace behavioral objectives and accountability, we shall have to take such frustrations into account both in what we undertake to teach and in the responses of our students. Otherwise, we may become unwitting accomplices to an Orwellan Newspeak by 1984.

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THE TEACHER IN A CHANGING SOCIETY: WILL THE LEOPARD CHANGE ITS SPOTS?

Anthony Roy Mangione

In the past the successful teacher was characterized as a scholarly, able practitioner, respected as a professional, not always as a person. Today's teacher, however, should demonstrate humaneness and competence, and in that order, since students of the seventies seem to learn only if they can first confide in their teacher as a person and then as a scholar.

Technology has hastened the reordering of priorities. Television, for example, continues to create a totally new environment for learning—a whole series of environments that, according to McLuhan, impinge on each other "in all-inclusive nowness." And today's student, conditioned to expect comparable involvement in school subjects, finds instead that "fragmentary and merely remote visualized goal or destiny in learning"—unreality, which he construes as irrelevance. The media-directed, under-thirty learner reveals attitudes that differ radically from those held by the book-oriented, linear-based learner. To be responsive, a successful classroom teacher needs to exploit the differences for their pedagogical implications; he cannot simply ignore them.

As a first imperative, he must be concerned with affective learning, choosing materials saturated with meaningful, experiential attitudes, values, concepts, and conflicts rather than with piddling details and little pertinent substance. In *Revolution in Teaching: New Theory, Technology, and Curricula* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), Alfred DeGrazia and David A. Sohn say that *Silas Marner* (the story of a good woman who reforms a miser) and "The Devil and Daniel Webster" (the tale of a fast-talking lawyer who outwits the devil) no longer work. Today's teacher, they maintain, should not expose pupils to a single set of values in the classrooms and allow them, simultaneously, to be abandoned to another set—many sets—in the outside world. Unless he is willing and able to unmask the hypocrisy of the contradiction, students will scorn him and the contradiction he stands for.

Secondly, the teacher must function as catalyst, inquirer, discoverer, and prober, posing the inquiries that produce understanding rather than information. He should also make use of role playing, group discussion, and multi-sided debates, generated by questions that involve students affectively, minimizing simple recall assignments that direct students to read, listen (if they do), and answer queries at the end of the chapter. In developing a capacity for open-ended-

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ness, the teacher has to continue to formulate different questions and give priority to questions posed by pupils, valuing these as more important than the answers given. As with his own inquiries, his students' questions must be real ones that point to the pulsating world in which they live, not to the rose-colored, anemic world that typifies the classroom.

A final imperative for today's teacher is improving students' self-images. It is, after all, just as easy to ask, "What did you learn in your reading about Shakespeare?" as to ask, "When was Shakespeare born?" The first question allows all students to participate; the latter eliminates those who failed to note the date of Shakespeare's birth or who thought it unimportant. Winston Churchill, while a student at Harrow, experienced firsthand the diminishing returns of close-ended questioning. He once remarked that "The teacher was always trying to find out what I didn't know, instead of what I did know. I knew a lot of history but never got a chance to say so." The teacher of the seventies should invariably accentuate the positive for his students. The teacher of English bears an especially heavy responsibility for drawing specific implications from these imperatives, since students are obliged to enroll in English classes for most of their academic life.

An initial implication requires that the teacher of English be primarily a teacher of language, preparing pupils to discriminate between rational and irrational discourse, between words as symbols of good and evil. Within an atmosphere that is so involved with words, teacher and pupils alike become students of language—knowledgeable, for example, about chauvinism, propaganda, subversion, and shibboleth; and competent to scrutinize the "Newspeak" of the courts, the schools, governmental agencies, and protest movements. The cry of irrelevance is rarely uttered under this heightened sensitivity to words.

A second and final implication mandates competence in curriculum. As a planner, innovator, implementor, and questioner of curriculum, the teacher of English may decide to keep a weaver named Marner, an assassin named Brutus, or a one-legged pirate named Silver; but not before considering the kinds of questions that are posed by DeGrazia and Sohn, in *Revolution in Teaching*:

> How can pride in our American heritage be combined with respect for the cultures of other people?
>
> What literature should be experienced by everyone, regardless of his future occupation?
>
> How can we avoid the present overemphasis on literature that depicts only the middle and upper classes?
>
> What literature from non-English-speaking lands should be experienced?
>
> What literature is so timeless and contemporary that all young people should experience it?
>
> What ingredients in American culture should be considered common components of everyone's experience?

As a corollary, students should assist the teacher of English with his curriculum tasks. Bob Dylan's folk-rock lyric, "Blowing in the Wind," a student choice for inclusion in the curriculum, provides affective experiences that generate stimulating discussions. By means of such selections, the teacher and his class can examine anew ideas about patriotism, war, and peace. Competence in curriculum matters makes for better learning-teaching situations.

In short, change must come—meaningful, affective changes rather than dehumanizing, disruptive ones that distort the learning process beyond recognition. As for teachers, McLuhan believes that their role "as unchallenged authorities, dispensers of information, and arbiters of morals and creativity" will gradually disappear. The leopard will indeed change its spots—in time.

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BOOKS OF YESTERDAY

Esther Bennett

Elementary children are so used to the colorful appealing world of today's books, that I decided to expose my sixth grade to books used many years ago.

I began with a world geography textbook printed in 1878 and another printed in 1927. They were fascinated! The maps. the sterility of facts and the dull illustrations amazed them. We compared the texts with our array of Social Studies textbooks, discussed the difficulty of writing an exciting, interesting textbook and conjectured about the future styles of textbooks.

Their interest was so great that I decided to expand the study into a unit and began with the old "A is for apple" book. After seeing this, everyone wrote his own "modern" version of alphabet rhymes and illustrated them.

We then arrived at the famous "McGuffy's Reader" and compared it with the third grade reading text used in our school. We discussed the importance of illustrations today as compared with those of long ago. In fact, the class marveled that anyone even bothered to learn to read!

I found a book printed in 1887 entitled "The History of the United States—Told in One Syllable Words"! This one realy sparked enthusiasm! The book was a treasurer of archaic phrases and style. I copied parts of this book. For example:

> I have said that the Danes kept up a trade with the main-land; but it was not the land that you will see near Green-land or Ice-land on the map. They did not know that such a great land was so near; for when they set sail they took but one course and that was to the land they had come from which was Den-mark.
>
> You can judge by the map how far off that was, and will not think it strange that it took so long a time to find out the great land that lay so near, but in a way they were not wont to go.
>
> One of the men who went with Eric, the Red, had a son, who at that time was in Nor-way, with which a trade was kept up. When the son came back to Ice-land and found that those with whom he made his home were not there, he made up his mind to go to Green-land too, though he did not know how to get there, and there was no one to show him the way.

We discussed the style of writing, especially the one-syllable approach, and then the class rewrote the selection the way it might be written today.

Mrs. Esther Bennett is a sixth grade classroom teacher in the Pashley Elementary School, of the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central Schools, in Scotia, New York.

The "D" volume of an encyclopedia, published in 1859, was regarded with awe! They learned that encyclopedias of that day were definitely written for adults, because of their advanced vocabulary. They were equally surprised that people of the 1800's were so knowledgeable. It was fun to choose some topics and compare the information with that found in our modern encyclopedia. It was also interesting to find that the majority of the topics weren't even found in today's encyclopedia, and vice-versa.

We perused some "Bobbsey Twins" and "Tom Swift" books as well as "Bomba, the Jungle Boy"—but no one cared to read them from cover to cover.

I culminated the unit with Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. Everyone was familiar with the story, not because they had read the book, but because they had either seen the film, or a play on television, read a comic-book version, or heard the record.

I chose a section of the story and read it to the class. Again, we discussed the style and vocabulary. I then divided the selection into various parts and each child wrote an assigned part as he believed it would be written today. Then we read it as a whole selection! We certainly didn't produce literature, but it was fun and a good learning experience.

The children brought many old books to school. More important, however, was that the entire unit was an interesting, enriching study of the world of books of many years ago, and of the change taking place in our language.

LET THE VOICE BE YOURS, TEACHER

Kenneth Gambone

"Good morning, Children, I'm Ogden Nash
And I hope you're fine; I'll speak to you my PORCUPINE."

"Any hound a porcupine nudges
Can't be blamed for harboring grudges.
I know one hound that laughed all winter
At a porcupine that sat on a splinter."

Read poetry to students. Read it aloud. The printed page has divorced us from the vocal meanings of poetry. Hold a reading. Sing again and again and again! Let the young ones hear your voice. Take them through the seasons of the year, holidays and historic events, folksongs, folktales and narratives. Let the sounds ring. Let the voice be your, Teacher.

Don't sermonize. Speak simply. Who wouldn't love a second reading from Nash:

The Guppy

"Whales have calves,
Cats have kittens,
Bears have cubs,
Bats have bittens.
Swans have cygnets,
Seals have puppies,
But guppies just have little guppies."

The sounds of poetry surround you. It may be nature: "When I see birches bend to left and right . . . ." "I think that I shall never see . . . ." "Woodman, spare that tree . . . ." The poet sings of sensitivity, too: "grave Alice and laughing Allegra, and Edith with golden hair." He also is a part of history: PAUL REVERE'S RIDE or BARBARA FRIETCHIE. Teacher, be direct. There is no need to analyze these lines. They are mute until you speak.

Are we mute as teachers? Can we not recite? Students lose their voice to our questions. Have we lost our voices, too? Let us hear ourselves again. Try a "reading aloud period." Ten minutes on some chosen day will do.

What! Still whispering to yourself. Speak, Man! Move your lips with the sounds of life. Move your lips with the sense of sound. Move your lips with poetry for the young. Move young lips with poetry. Can you?

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54